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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Meeting of Officials preparatory
to the Conference of Plenipotentiaries

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 11-14 February 1988

LC/NAIROBI

FINAL REPORT

A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. The meeting of Officials in preparation for the Conference of Plenipotentiaries of the African Organization for Cartography and Remote Sensing was held at the headquarters of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 11 to 13 February 1988. The meeting was convened to implement the decisions contained in resolution 602 (XXII) of the ECA Conference of Ministers adopted at its thirteenth meeting, held in Addis Ababa on 27 April 1987 which duly took account of the decisions of the joint meeting of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries of the African Association of Cartography and African Remote Sensing Council held in Kinshasa in March 1987.

2. The meeting was attended by the following member States: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Congo, Egypt, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan, United Republic of Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zaire.

3. Rwanda not a member of the African Organization of Cartography or the African Remote Sensing Council attended as an observer.

4. The Organization of African Unity and the following institutions were also represented: the African Association of Cartography and the African Remote Sensing Council, the Regional Centre for Training in Aerospace Surveys, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, the Regional Centre for Services in Surveying, Mapping and Remote Sensing, Nairobi, Kenya, the Regional Remote Sensing Centre, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

Election of Officers

5. The meeting elected the following Officers:

Chairman:	Mali (M. Diadie Traoré)
First Vice-Chairman:	Tunisia (Mr Tijani Essid)
Second Vice-Chairman:	Gabon (M. Michel Nguema-Mengome)
Third Vice-Chairman:	Tanzania (Mr. Edwin Njau)
Rapporteur:	Madagascar (M. Jean Ch. Rakotoary)

B. AGENDA

6. The meeting discussed the provisional agenda prepared by the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Africa in consultation with the Secretaries-General of the African Association of Cartography and the African Remote Sensing Council and, after necessary amendments, adopted the following:

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Election of Officers
3. Adoption of the agenda
4. ECA report on the implementation of recommendations of the Kinshasa joint meeting of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries of the African Remote Sensing Council and the African Association of Cartography
5. Reports of the Committee established on the inventory of assets of the AAC and ARSC
6. Reports of the Secretaries-General of the AAC and ARSC on the present situation of their respective institutions
7. Consideration of draft staff rules and regulations, including salaries and allowances, job descriptions and organizational structure
8. Consideration of draft financial rules and regulations of the Organization, as well as conditions of admission or withdrawal of associate members of the Organization
9. Review of offers and recommendation on the hosting of the headquarters of the Organization
10. Consideration of and recommendation on the work programme and budget of the Organization
11. Consideration of the candidatures for the post of Secretary-General of the African Organization for Cartography and Remote Sensing
12. Consideration of the draft agenda for the Conference of Plenipotentiaries
13. Any other business
14. Adoption of the report
15. Closure of the meeting.

C. ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS

7. Mr. Tchouta-Moussa, Deputy Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa declared the meeting open. In his opening address, he extended warm welcome to all participants to the headquarters of the Commission at which they were to undertake preparations for the inaugural meeting of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries of the African Organization for Cartography and Remote Sensing. Recalling that the joint Conference of Plenipotentiaries of the African Association of Cartography and the African Remote Sensing Council which met in Kinshasa, Zaire, in March 1987 took important decisions which would lead to the launching of the new Organization, Mr. Tchouta-Moussa reminded the participants of keeping in mind the recommendations contained in various ministerial resolutions which would realize the smooth establishment of the African Organization for Cartography and Remote Sensing. In particular he drew attention to ECA Conference of Ministers resolution 602(XXII) that called upon the Executive Secretary of ghe ECA to take appropriate measures towards the effective establishment of the Organization.

8. He expressed the hope that the meeting would be guided by wisdom to make the task of launching of the new Organization smooth for the Plenipotentiaries.

9. Regarding some items of the agenda, Mr. Tchouta-Moussa observed in particular the questions concerning the post of Secretary-General of the Organization, he urged the officials to be as objective as possible and propose a dynamic person so that the best candidate for the job is appointed to head the Organization.

10. Before concluding his address, he expressed thanks to the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity for the assistance in translating the Organization's constitution into Arabic and Portugues.

ECA report on the implementation of recommendation of the Kinshasa joint meeting of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries of the AAC and ARSC (Agenda item 4)

11. A representative of the secretariat, presented document E/ECA/NRD/CART/117 entitled: «Report on implementation of decisions of the Kinshasa joint meeting of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries of the African Remote Sensing Council and the African Association of Cartography». A brief account was given on each of the aspects which were referred to ECA for action, namely:

(a) Translation of the initialled constitution into the adopted languages and transmittal to member States;

(b) Advertisement of the post of Secretary-General of the African Organization for Cartography and Remote Sensing and centralization of candidatures;

(c) Date and venue of the first session of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries.

12. During protracted discussions on the agenda item, the most controversial subject centred on the discrepancies between the text of the constitution initialled at Kinshasa and that translated by the ECA and sent to the member States.

13. The meeting decided that the ECA version of the constitution should be disregarded and agreed to work within the framework of the constitution adopted and initialled at Kinshasa. The meeting decided that the version adopted and initialled at Kinshasa should be that to be presented to the Plenipotentiaries for signature in all languages as provided for under Article 22 of the constitution of the African Organization for Cartography and Remote Sensing.

Reports of the committees established on the inventory of assets of the AAC and ARSC (Agenda item 5)

14. The President of the African Association of Cartography presented the report of the committee on the inventory of the assets of the AAC and those lent by the host country. After a brief discussion, the meeting adopted the report.

15. On behalf of the Minister who is the President of the African Remote Sensing Council, the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania presented the report of the Inventory Committee set up to establish the assets of the Council and those lent by the host country. After a brief discussion, the participants adopted the report.

~~Reports of the Secretaries-General of~~ the ~~AAC and ARSC~~ on the present situation of their respective institutions (Agenda item 6)

16. In introducing his report, the Secretary-General of the AAC stressed the healthy financial situation of his institution. He indicated the overall commitments of the AAC for 1988 and statutory staff entitlements. Referring to the meeting of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries held at Kinshasa, the Secretary-General informed the participants that Côte d'Ivoire had recently paid 30 per cent of its arrears to the AAC and that Morocco was in the process of remitting 25 per cent of its arrears. The Secretary-General reported on the financial support of the Organization of African Unity towards the execution of the International Hydrogeological Map for the African project.

The project was also being supported by the Federal Republic of Germany through the provision of equipment and funds for specific workshops on the subject. The ABDA has provided financial assistance to the OAU project being implemented by the AAC. The Government of Yugoslavia has also contributed substantially to the project. With regard to the standardization of specifications for cartographic maps, the Government of Morocco was printing free of charge the document prepared jointly with ECA. It was also reported that the Government of Algeria had, as the host government to the Association provided a number of services to the AAC. The representative of Libyan Arab Jamahiriya announced that actions are being taken in order to expedite payment of these arrears part of which will be transferred soon.

17. In conclusion, the Secretary-General made a summary of the actual situation of the Association and that as at the time of reporting, the AAC still reported a positive balance in its accounts. After many delegations commented favourably on the manner this institution had operated and its finances managed, several delegations expressed sincere felicitations to the Government of Algeria for the assistance it was giving to the AAC.

18. Following the presentation, several participants expressed their satisfaction for the manner in which the work of the AAC was organized and on healthy financial situation of the AAC. As Dr. Fezzani, Secretary-General, had not tabled his candidature for the post of Secretary-General of the African Organization for Cartography and Remote Sensing (AOCRS), many delegations recommended that the Conference of Plenipotentiaries should explore the possibility with the OAU for the award of a gold medal to Dr. Fezzani for his outstanding contributions to the development of cartography in Africa. Mali proposed that each African institution of cartography should name a room after Dr. Fezzani Chedly.

19. The Secretary-General of the ARSC presented the report entitled: «Situation of the African Remote Sensing Council» and «Structural difficulties of the ARSC and proposals for harmonization of regional programmes of cartography and remote sensing and a prospective vision of future arrangements». In the first part of the report dealing with the situation of the Council, the Secretary-General presented the execution of the 1987 budget and indicated that the difficult situation of the Council was a result of the non-payment of contributions by a large number of member States. However, eight countries had made efforts in that respect (Algeria, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, United Republic of Tanzania and Zaire). The Secretary-General expressed his sincere gratitude to the Government of Mali for providing 50 million CFA francs as an advance payment to the Council and which had enabled it to survive. The Secretary-General indicated action to be pursued by the African Organization for Cartography and Remote Sensing vis à vis member States, specialized centres and co-operating countries and organizations. In the second part of his report, the Secretary-General referred to the work constraints facing the Council in view of the African

remote sensing programme instituted by ECA term and which carries out the same activities as the Council. He also pointed to co-ordination difficulties of specialized centres and made proposals for harmonization of the activities of the AOCRS and specialized centres. Finally, the Secretary-General made suggestions for the future of the AOCRS regarding action to be taken so that Africa derive the maximum benefits from the performance of future remote sensing satellites.

20. After exchanging views on the presentation of the Secretary-General of the ARSC, the participants congratulated the Secretary-General for his clear and precise intervention and noted that he had been working in particularly difficult conditions in view of the non-payment of contributions by the majority of member States and also because a good portion of remote sensing activities were carried out by ECA. The participants congratulated the Government of Mali for the unflinching support it had given to the Council throughout the periods it faced serious financial difficulties. Delegates appealed to member States with arrears to pay their contributions as soon as possible so as to offset the debt owed by the institution as recommended by the meeting of plenipotentiaries at Kinshasa. The participants expressed their support for the proposals made by the Secretary-General of the ARSC regarding the quick transfer of African programmes in cartography and remote sensing, the harmonization of work programmes of specialized centres with that of the African Organization for Cartography and Remote Sensing and the appeal to member States of the AOCRS to harmonize the activities of their organizations in cartography and remote sensing.

Consideration of draft staff rules and regulations and consideration of financial rules and regulations (Agenda items 7 and 8)

21. The representative of the ECA secretariat informed the meeting that the documents on the two agenda items were being introduced for information and comments, then they would be considered at a later date by the Executive Committee, when established, as provided for in Article 9 of the Constitution. After the comments on the need to adopt the rules or to defer them for the Executive Committee to examine and submit for approval of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries, the meeting agreed that, for the interim period of not more than one year, the financial rules and regulations of the AAC should be used.

Review of offers and recommendation on the hosting of the headquarters of the Organization (Agenda item 9)

22. Before the presentation of document E/ECA/NRD/CART/118 the representative of Mali expressed his appreciation to all the member States that had put confidence in his country first by selecting Bamako as the headquarters of the ARSC and by supporting its offer to host the AOCRS. He then informed the meeting that his government had withdrawn its offer to host the headquarters of the new organization in favour of that of Algeria. The meeting expressed its appreciation for the gesture.

23. The representative of the ECA secretariat then presented the document and stated that originally three offers to host the headquarters of the Organization had been received from Algeria, Mali and Nigeria. With the withdrawal of Mali in the announcement just made and the confirmatory telex which ECA just received, only two offers remained.

24. In the discussions that followed, some delegations asked for more information on requirements for hosting the institution and what facilities each of the potential host countries had offered. In replying, the secretariat provided additional information to the requirements contained in the draft host government agreement forwarded to all member States, and added that Algeria had indicated provision of facilities over and above those currently provided for the AAC. Nigeria, on the other hand, had not yet provided information on what it would offer. There was a consensus that the offer of Algeria to host Organization be accepted.

25. The Nigerian delegation raised a strong objection to the methodology of deciding on hosting the headquarters of the Organization. In its view, the decision on the choice of a host country for the Organization was the prerogative of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries. The delegation requested that its objection be placed on record.

Consideration of and recommendation on, the work programme and budget of the Organization (Agenda item 10)

26. Two documents were presented on the programme and budget for the period 1988 to 1990. The document presented by the secretarit of the ECA brought out certain elements of methodology in the preparation of budget which brought out clearly the elements and outputs which should be delivered to governments. The second document jointly prepared by AAC and ARSC and presented by the AAC contained financial implications of the programme and budget and gave indications of expenses for the years 1988, 1989 and 1990. After several interventions on the budget, the meeting asked the secretariats (AAC and ARSC) to prepare an austerity and realistic budget for the year 1988 only which would later be examined by the meeting for the consideration and approval of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries. The participants strongly suggested that during the interim period OAU and ECA should assist in a sustained fashion the activities of the new institution until it achieves its autonomy in 1988. The new organization was also requested to continue all ongoing projects and to adjust its programme to the ECA 1988/1989 biennium and the UNDP fourth programming cycle. The Secretary-General of the AOCRS was also requested to approach the existing regional centres so as to include their respective programmes into the triennial programme of activities of the AOCRS to be submitted to the extraordinary conference.

Consideration of the candidatures for the post of Secretary-General of the African Organisation for Cartography and Remote Sensing (Agenda item 11)

27. A representative of the secretariat presented the report contained in document E/ECA/NRD/CART/119 and reported on the actions taken by ECA to implement the relevant recommendation of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries at Kinshasa. After the Executive Secretary had written to all African member States, applications had been received from six candidates three of whom were endorsed by their governments, and the rest were not endorsed. He also suggested to the meeting of Officials that one of the usual ways of dealing with appointment of a staff of an organization is to set up a small committee consisting of five member States from each of the subregions, ECA and OAU representatives, and provide it with terms of reference for examining the candidatures. The committee would then report back to the officials.

28. After a protracted discussion on the modalities of appointing a Secretary-General, the meeting decided that the appointment of a substantive Secretary-General should be postponed until the extraordinary meeting to be held in a year's time at the latest. Meanwhile the meeting recommended that one of the two Secretaries-General of AAC and ARSC should be appointed on interim basis for a period of up to one year during which time the process of recruiting a substantive Secretary-General will take place. This would ensure continuity of the programmes undertaken by the two institutions and a good start for the new AOCRS.

Consideration of the draft agenda for the Conference of Plenipotentiaries (Agenda item 12)

29. The secretariat presented the following provisional draft agenda for the Conference of Plenipotentiaries to the meeting for consideration and was adopted without amendments.

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Signature of the Constitution of the African Organization for Cartography and Remote Sensing
3. Election of the Bureau
4. Adoption of the agenda and programme of work
5. Consideration and adoption of the report of the meeting of Officials
6. Selection of the headquarters of the Organization

7. Appointment of the Secretary-General

8. Appointment of members of the Executive Board

9. Date and place of the next meeting of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries

10. Any other business

11. Adoption of the report

12. Closure of the meeting

Any other business (Agenda item 13)

30. There was no other business raised.

Adoption of the report of the meeting (Agenda item 14)

31. The participants examined the draft report paragraph by paragraph and included amendments by consensus. The report was then unanimously adopted.

Closure of the meeting (Agenda item 15)

32. During its closing session, the participants expressed their appreciation to the Chairman and members of the Bureau for their efficiency in conducting the work of the meeting. They also thanked the ECA secretariat staff for their efforts and contribution to the success of the meeting.

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